

**MORE OBSERVATIONS ON *EUBLEMMA OSTRINA* (HÜBNER) –
THE PURPLE MARBLED (LEP.: NOCTUIDAE)**

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MENTION WAS MADE in a previous paper of the discovery of a temporary colony of *Eublemma ostrina* Hübner in the Burren District of Western Ireland (Elliott & Skinner, 1993) and the purpose of these notes is to expand our knowledge of this species in the field and give a more detailed description of the larva and pupa. All the larvae found were in the flower heads of *Carlina vulgaris* L.; *Cirsium vulgare* Ten. was also present, but not tenanted. Only fully grown larvae or pupae were located.

The initial search for larvae was instigated by the capture of a fresh specimen to paraffin light on the 15th August combined with the knowledge of a small immigration of adults to the English mainland which had occurred earlier in mid-May. The locality supported scattered stands of *Carlina vulgaris* and almost the first mature flower head opened contained a small noctuid pupa of the correct size to be our quarry. Continued search over the next few days yielded over twenty more larvae or pupae. It soon became obvious that those seeding flower heads that were distorted with raised florets with darkly discoloured bases were those most worthy of dissection. A closer inspection occasionally revealed the presence of a small amount of frass issuing from between the base of the flower and stem.

No more than one larva was ever found per flower head although several heads of a multi-headed plant could be tenanted. All the larvae pupated within the heads with one exception and this constructed a papery boat-shaped cocoon, reminiscent of the Chloephorinae, on the side of a plastic container.

The full-grown larva measures 15mm, is sparsely setose and greyish-green with a broad pale green dorsal stripe. The narrower sub-dorsal and subspiracular lines are of the same colour. The head is dark brown and the thoracic plate freckled dark-green and brown. The pupa measures 10.5mm long and is glossy light-brown with distinctly darker wing cases.

Apart from the original capture at light our only other encounter with an adult was coming across a specimen at rest on the top of a large rock in the full glare of the sun. Despite a very cautious approach it took off backwards and upwards and it was impossible to follow the rapid flight.

The resulting adults displayed the full range of colour variation known in this species from the dark purplish-pink type to the yellow ab. *carthami* Herrich-Schäffer which included the extreme aberration shown on plate III, figure 10, *Br. J. ent. nat. Hist.* 6: 1993.

Reference

Elliott, B. & Skinner, B., 1993. Migrant Lepidoptera in the west of Ireland in 1992. *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.* 105: 179-181.